Northwest Territories Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations

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Joint Cabinet/Accountability and Oversight Pipeline Planning Committee Meetings - 2/4/2005

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The Joint Cabinet/Accountability and Oversight Pipeline Planning Committee held another productive meeting earlier this week in Norman Wells. The committee advises government on the best ways to approach the Mackenzie Gas Project and proposed pipeline.
"It is important for the government to get out into the regions," says the chair of the committee Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED). "It helps us better understand community concerns and needs to ensure that northerners benefit significantly from the proposed project."

At the committee meeting, the members reviewed a Municipal and Community Affairs reports called "Preparing for the Pipeline". That report outlines the conclusions of a Territorial Government sponsored conference held in Inuvik this past December. Fifty community leaders attended the conference to discuss challenges and opportunities related to the Mackenzie Gas Project. This week the Pipeline Planning Committee members reviewed ways to help communities address their concerns about the development.

"Communities have significant needs as they prepare for development," says the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Honourable Michael McLeod. "Our government is committed to work with communities to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead."

Members also discussed the government's intervention process with respect to the Joint Review Panel and National Energy Board. The government continues to review the Mackenzie Gas Project in the public's interest.

The ministers and MLAs spent time listening and responding to resident's concerns, at a meeting with Town Council and at a public meeting in the evening.

Sahtu MLA, Norman Yakeleya suggested the committee travel to his riding, which is along the proposed pipeline route and is experiencing an increasing level of oil and gas activity.

"Our time in Norman Wells was good for the public," Yakeleya says. "It allowed them to raise a broad range of issues with the Ministers under the various portfolios."

The next Joint Cabinet/Accountability and Oversight Committee meeting will be held in Fort Simpson this spring. Committee members expect that meeting to be as productive and insightful as the recent trip to Norman Wells.

Committee members in attendance: Hon. Brendan Bell, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic

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Development; Hon. Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment/Justice; Hon. Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister of Transportation; Kevin Menicoche, MLA Nahendeh; Bobby Villeneuve, MLA Tu Nedeh; Norman Yakeleya, MLA Sahtu.

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